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# ARCHIVES!

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THIS ISSUE

BUCHANAN V. THE WORLD!



DIE!!



And so, with this move I have won the game and taken the world championship at diplomacy. I am quite happy, as you might think. I enjoyed beating the Verhel dens...

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ANOTHER  
QUALITY  
ALBATROSS  
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GUSH  
GULLY

MARK JENSEN  
1971

AND WITH THE  
CRY-"DIE"  
THE BROTHERS V.  
TAKE OVER!

11 December 1971

Hoosier Archives is a periodic listing of the Diplomacy archives of Walter Buchanan, 303 S. Lebanon, Indiana 46052, telephone (317) 482-2824; Archives Director, H3/Club; a Director of The Diplomacy Association; and a member of IADG. Since the archives is virtually complete in at least xerox form back to 1966, the archives listing will only appear quarterly, the last being in issue #35, or as further substantial additions are acquired. However, additions to the archives are solicited, either through originals, which are preferred, or a loan to permit xeroxing. Also, postage fees will be paid for duplicates so that they can be made available to others. Many original spares are now available. The main purpose of Hoosier Archives is to make available information from the archives, such as Diplomacy articles, game news, etc., as well as to serve as a medium for original articles, which are solicited. To subscribe to Hoosier Archives, send one stamped, self-addressed business size envelope per issue. For back issues, only a stamp per issue is necessary. Ask for issue #40 to get a list of all articles through issue #37. This is Allatross Press publication #52.

#### INFO THE ARCHIVES: NO. 15

After an absence of ten issues, it is nice to have Dick Brooks back again. This time he goes into an interesting discussion of the different Diplomacy variants. Maybe next time he should tell how to get the most supply centers in a single game year? Did you see in Diplomaholia in 1970AD where he took eight of them as Austria in 1909?

#### DIPLOMACY AS I SEE IT

by Dick Brooks  
The Variants

I started playing Diplomacy late in 1965. I had joined the IADG about April '65 through my surface fiction interests and drifted into the Games Bureau. I wish I could remember who the interested in Diplomacy, but I did order a set and messed around with it a bit. I naturally wanted to try a game. With most of the players in the Games Bureau, then in the Indiana Science Fiction Association, a face-to-face game was out of the question. I enrolled in CI-1965-66 (1965) and my early talents asserted themselves as I tried to get talked into alliances with Turkey (Lanks Delane) and England (Alexis Militant). I planned to go it alone. Also, I missed both fall 1961 and fall 1962 moves with an excuse from the CIADG. Turkey and I drew while Alexis withdrew over CI Chalken's ruling on the military situation. (Such is the fickleness of fate. Think of how much typical "The Game Situation" could have saved commentators.)

Up until 1971, I played in the Games Bureau with two exceptions, IADG (strictly regular game-time variant) and Red Walker's 1960L, only my third regular game as opposed to 17 variants. Now I got on top of it enough to try another game, CI-1966-67 was open. This was the Chalken nine-man game where the tertiary Coast and Scandinavia were the extra countries. I won this one eventually by first allying with England (Lanks Delane) and Turkey (Alan Blair), then allying with Italy (Margaret Desigmani). This was the game where France (Don Miller) ended up with an army in Persia.

The tactic of Russia allying with both Turkey and England and taking a lesser share of the spoils on each front while gaining on both had proved to elevate me to a perfect record. If I'd quit then, I could have been a Diplomacy legend and an elder statesman commenting from my exalted peak. But I was hooked and gratted onto as many games as I could handle, if not more.

From here, I tried almost every variant that I could. (I dislike economic Diplomacy.) At this time, Don Miller ran about every variant that he could find players for and postulated and collected ones even wilder. I have always been more interested in learning a game and playing it enough to grasp its potential than I have been in playing one for extended periods of time.

Don Miller has set up a classification system for variants which I understand that Red Walker will issue numbers on from '66 on. L. Pandin, in TERMINUS, is doing a valuable service

the regular board is different on all boards, and the board is different on all boards.

The board can be split basically into two groups, those with the regular board and those with a modified board. I would be tempted to group those with a European board, such as the regular board with a strengthened Germany into a subgroup of the first (yep, I know, but I'm not a mathematician, I'm a variantist).

The regular board has allowed for some good variants. GAA, the Game of Anarchy, started with 8 players which really put the emphasis on diplomacy. I started with 7 and the rest of the board managed to set up an alliance between Spain, Portugal, Corsica, Ireland, and Paris. Paris and Ireland were to go after Belgium while Spain and Portugal were to go after the Atlantic and guard our flank. Unfortunately, the regular alliances are unstable especially when one realizes that all five of the little ones, of course, are not. Our "alliance" wiped out Spain and Portugal in two years. A later variant narrowed the players down to 17, but with widely separated centers such as Corsica, Ireland, and Paris. In fact, when any player reached five centers, he had to declare that all of his other centers could only exist in that after that.

And (A.1.1), the Game of Anarchy, have been too only games that I ever played out of. I have an over-developed sense of obligation, but there are limits. I have never seen a game of seven players written up for all seven countries, then the 6 would have the power that would be used. Germany (Alan Huff) had a burst of luck and got up to 11 by luck, never as having 11. (A.1.1) I Russia to St. Petersburg. Laterally the rest of us "played" against him and put him back down. Three or four of us had a loose alliance together, with me making the move sets. Turkey with one unit had as much chance of getting his orders down as Germany with eleven. So we brought him in and worked against Germany, Austria and Russia. I quit the game as the results were too uncertain and the game looked as if it would never end indefinitely. I wish I had noticed how it came out. There was a large turnover of players in that game and most of my allies had dropped before I did.

And was the Lebling variant with all neutrals armed and it went slower than a regular game. GAA was a Game of Anonymity where the players were unknown to each other and hopefully tactics would shine. GAA was the year-at-a-time variant of Tretick's where a player wrote up moves (non-conditional, of course) for a whole year and hoped that you hadn't overlooked anything. HE was the Balharver Napoleonic rulebook variant with Germany and Italy in standing disorder.

And was a 3C3 with Wild Card Player featuring the FAls and the FAls with a strengthened Germany between. This had the weakness of any three-man that two gang up on one. The team captain was only allowed to submit the three players' moves which didn't allow for defections. Other variants have concerned smaller changes, such as the spring raid which allowed possession of supply centers only occupied on a spring move, or allowing the game to start with winter 1900 builds by each player after negotiating.

My first face-to-face gaming started at Tri-State College in January of 1971. I started two seven-man games with a game year played out every week, but one fellow dropped after missing a few moves. Most of our face-to-face games were three, four, and five man as our schedules didn't allow all of us to get together at once. The original rulebook three man with England, France, and Germany usually started with Germany getting a fast lead. Then England and France at least informally allied and tended to deadlock over the corpse of Germany.

The rulebook four man seems weighted in Italy's favor as Italy can concentrate on picking up Trieste and Vienna while Germany is surrounded by an embarrassment of riches. Germany doesn't dare go full out over Trieste and Vienna with Holland, Denmark, Belgium and Sweden open. If Germany does go after Italy, he usually gets gutted by France and England. If he allies with Italy, he bears the brunt of the English-French attack. If he allies with England or France against the other, Italy usually picks up the pieces. A three-man alliance against Italy doesn't tend to hold together as Germany gains the lion's share of the spoils and France and England tend to tackle Germany as soon as Italy is on the ropes.

We developed an interesting three-man game in which Austria, Germany, and Russia face each other. All of England, France, and Turkey were off limits. We first tried making Norway a non-supply center space with Venice the only Italian center, but it made Austria too powerful, so all of Italy was off-limits. Tunis and Bulgaria (the Black Sea was connected to the Aegean Sea) as well as Belgium were omitted. The North Sea connected to the Ionian and formed the limits of the playing area.

Next quarter, we will be looking at the project and how to do it. Various parts of Austria and Germany will have a board with all other major powers. Austria and Italy would be sides. Russia or Turkey along with Italy and England would be other sides. I'll probably try only two or three more boards at the time at the moment.

Three and four-man games deadlock so much that we came to the conclusion that there should have at least five players. Seven seems to be about the best and nine could be better with a much revised board, as putting two weak countries on the fringes of the board would not do much. Eleven could be interesting, but I know of no variant along these lines. I would like another go at the 17 or 34-man games, though.

Some of the variant boards can lead to interesting games. I've, of course, seen many variants using the same board based on Tolkien's Middle-earth with the last two being based on the World with London greatly strengthened over the first game. I've also seen a board based on Tolkien's Second Age and used a board quite different from the others.

III (Cythoracy) used a totally synthetic board drawn up and modified in consultation with the Washington group. It played a pretty decent game. The board was split by a roughly S-shaped sea in the middle and had three continents and two islands. One power had a seat on two continents while another had the smallest continent to itself.

III (Scottomacy) had England the most powerful country with the clans of Scotland next, their centers intermingled. England (Ianks Hebane) and the Stewarts (myself), which were all but one of five centers in southern Scotland, got together and mopped up the board.

CAA (Indianomacy) had a board of North America and featured the Indian war. I played the Iroquois and was fortunate enough to have a relatively isolated power so that I needed no working alliance all game. This did away with all need for diplomacy and I enjoyed my time. I can down to the wire facing the Shoshoni (Don Miller). Amusingly enough, getting back to 11 O'CLOCK and Miller was OK by now. I knew his style well enough so that there was no friction. However, in both games, once I'd worked matters to a one-on-one, I'm ashamed to admit that I lost them both.

Don Miller also G'd a regular map variant where each player could at the end of his moves link or separate two pairs of provinces. These would hold until another player changed them. There was also a two-earth game played on two maps where Paris I was linked to Paris II as well as its surrounding centers on Europe I.

IV (The Foundation Game) was based on Isaac Asimov's Foundation Series (winner of the science fiction Hugo award for best all-time series). The board was strictly synthetic since the Foundation series covered most of our galaxy from rim (Terminus, incidentally) to center. Fritz Schulhauser developed the board, but I'm indebted to Ianks Hebane for giving me a copy that he drew up. The board (don't panic) is formed of three-dimensional polyhedra with two and three factor supply centers and spaces at the vertices. The board uses two-dimensional tetrahedral diagrams to represent the five interconnected polyhedra. Each of the six players could write two hyperspace linkage orders with spring and fall moves that could only be used by the person who wrote them up and only last through the next movement season. The only units were fleets.

This has been the most tactically complex variant that I've played in and I liked it the best despite losing it on the last move (I was young and trusting). I am definitely hoping for another game when Don Miller gets around to it. It has been the only game that I regretted its being over and wanted to play in longer. With most, it's a relief to get them over with.

The tactical possibilities of Diplomacy are too limited. Lee Henderson and I are working on a game (actually four at the moment, but with similar rules) that will combine the strategic and tactical advantages of an Avalon Hill type board and unit, with the multi-player, lack of dice flipping, and simultaneous moves advantages of Diplomacy. Instead of having specified areas of control, I favor a parameter game where all players come on from off the board. This way, the number of players can change without modifying the board. This is, to my way of thinking, a way of providing a better balance of diplomacy and strategy.

It's time the variants stopped being the poor relations of Diplomacy. I have a great deal of respect for Allan Calhauer's designing ability but I seriously doubt that his concepts can't be improved upon. The weakness of Italy, the defensive strength of Turkey, the expansive potential of Russia, the convoying strength of England, the vulnerability of Austria are all imbalances. Probably all imbalances will be impossible to remove without a cloying symmetry that would leave one country in exactly the same position as another. Improvement is possible. Let's get on with it.